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ABSTRACT

The Baltimore County Public School system implemented the use of quality circles in its school improvement programs to facilitate change through increased involvement of faculty in decision making. The program increased the productivity and the motivation of the staff in their efforts to strive toward excellence. This paper describes the program and presents two case studies that illustrate how the participative management structure worked to solve problems. Ten figures are provided. (CB)

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EDUCATIONAL WANTS AND NEEDS:

IDENTIFICATION AND ACQUISITION THROUGH PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

QUALITY CIRCLES

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EDUCATIONAL WANTS AND NEEDS: Identification and Acquisition Through Participative Management Structures (Quality Circles)

Introduction

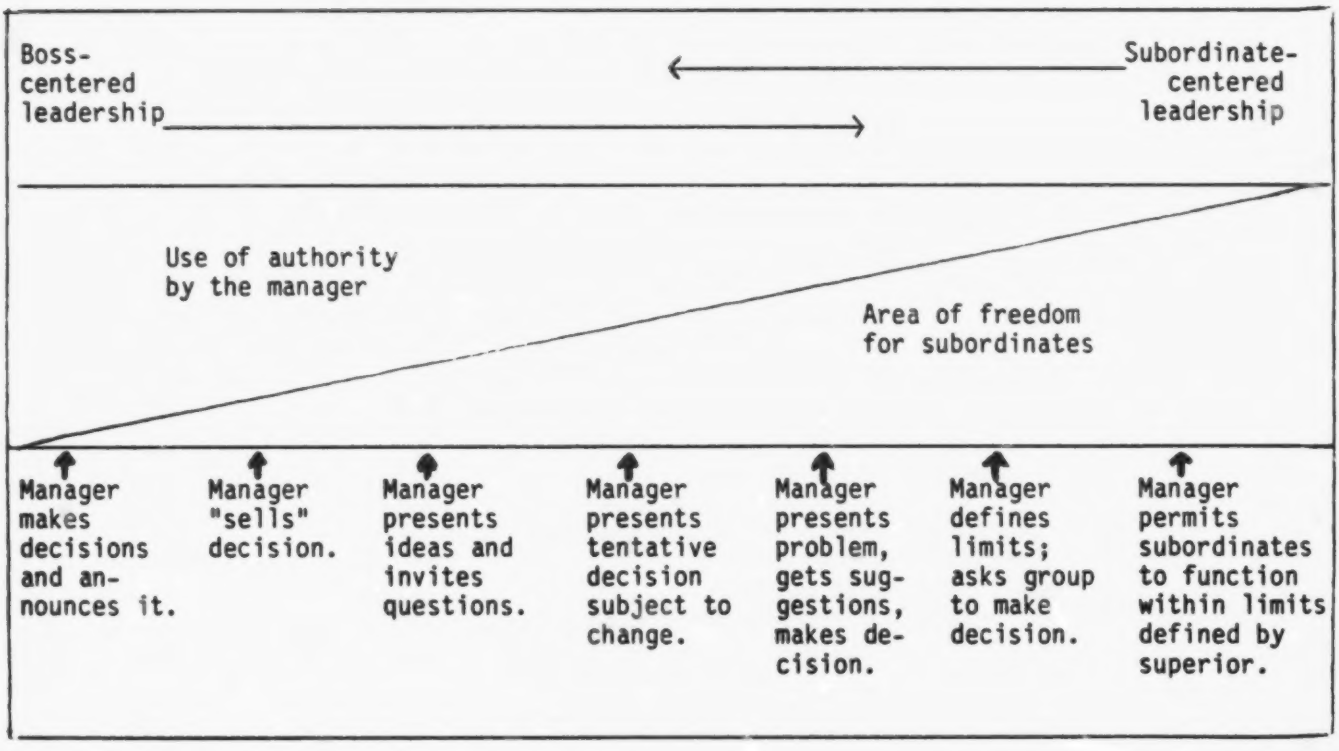
When those responsible for providing quality education for students are involved in making decisions about their work and their work environment, they will be motivated toward change and school improvement. More specifically, teachers who identify and solve their own problems are likely to feel energized, empowered to increase student achievement, and effective in implementing needed change. This premise underlies the implementation of participative management structures in the Baltimore County, Maryland Public Schools.

There are many initiatives to encourage change toward school improvement in the school system. Some are temporary structures including committees and task forces to conduct a recent self-study of the curriculum and training of trainers in the change process. One initiative, however, is different. It is the implementation of quality circles, the first formally organized attempt to initiate change through a parallel, lasting structure for employee involvement. It is the purpose of this paper to describe that parallel structure which was established in 1984 and to illustrate its effects in schools. The program has enabled faculty and other staff to initiate changes that have solved problems in communications, saved time in preparing reports, clarified ways to get specific jobs accomplished, increased staff, and saved money. Stated simply, increased involvement of faculty in making decisions in schools has been a major factor in facilitating change.

Historical Background

The use of participative management, like that in the quality circle process, has been a topic of study by educational theorists examining leadership behaviors for decades. For example, Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) suggested there is a continuum of behavior ranging from autocratic to democratic leadership. Effective leadership was viewed as a range of patterns from nearly exclusive authority for decision making accepted by the manager to nearly exclusive freedom of a group to function independently of the manager (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1973). This continuum of leadership behaviors is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Continuum of Leadership Behavior


Boss-centered leadership
Subordinate-centered leadership
Use of authority by the manager
Area of freedom for subordinates
Manager makes decisions and announces it.
Manager "sells" decision.
Manager presents ideas and invites questions.
Manager presents tentative decision subject to change.
Manager presents problem, gets suggestions, makes decision.
Manager defines limits; asks group to make decision.
Manager permits subordinates to function within limits defined by superior.

It was concluded that managers have options to use a variety of behaviors in addressing varying situations.

A similar suggestion, asserting that the situation and the group itself influence the type of leadership behavior which is appropriate, was made by Hersey and Blanchard (1976) in their situational leadership theory. This theory is based on the amount of direction, or task behavior, and the amount of socio-emotional support, or relationship behavior, a leader must provide--given the situation and the level of maturity of the group (Hersey and Blanchard, 1976). According to Situational Leadership Theory, as the level of maturity of the group continues to increase in terms of accomplishing a specific task, the leader should reduce task behavior and increase relationship behavior (Hersey and Blanchard, 1976).

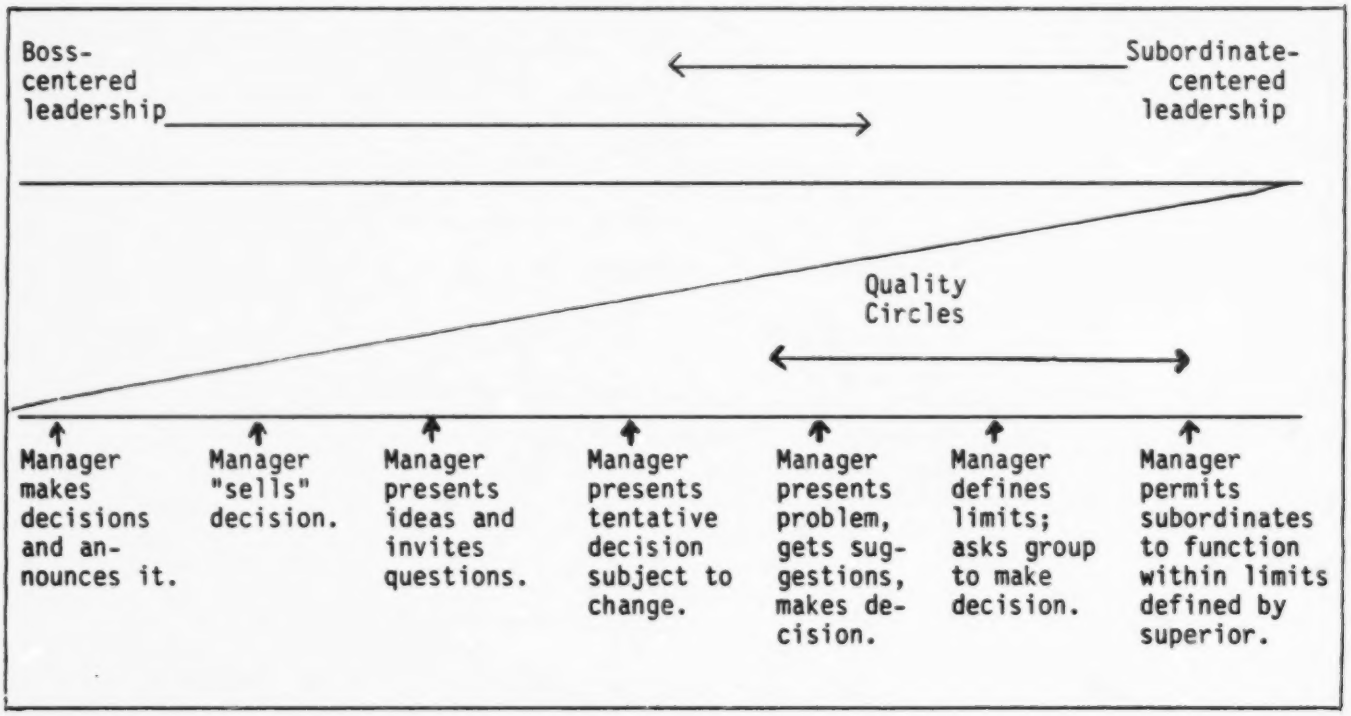
In the current social context, with increasing complexity, rapid change, and mature members of teaching groups, it is suggested that leaders involve and use all available human resources. It is clear that changes are needed in education. Efforts to guide those changes have been made throughout history, but more recently in the reforms suggested in reports such as The Nation At Risk (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986), Tomorrow's Teachers (The Holmes Group, 1986) and Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education (National Governors' Association, 1986).

These educational reform reports have proposed ways to improve education and included suggestions for restructuring the management and administration of schools. While the Report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) provided the impetus for radical changes in some school systems to lead teachers rather than principals as the school heads, it would seem that the more traditional structure can be adapted to increase teacher involvement in decision making without eliminating local school administrators. Recognizing that change is a process in both individuals

and groups, it appears that movement toward more democratic leadership in increasing numbers of situations--often where there are no "right" answers--is warranted. Facilitating that movement in the Baltimore County Public Schools over the last three years has been the quality circle program.

Conceptually, the use of a quality circles process can be placed on the continuum of behaviors toward subordinate-centered leadership to illustrate the increased involvement of staff. Using the Tannenbaum-Schmidt Continuum of Leadership Behavior, one can see the degree of participation and freedom for

Figure 2. Quality Circles Shown on Continuum of Leadership Behavior


Boss-centered leadership
Subordinate-centered leadership
Quality Circles
Manager makes decisions and announces it.
Manager "sells" decision.
Manager presents ideas and invites questions.
Manager presents tentative decision subject to change.
Manager presents problem, gets suggestions, makes decision.
Manager defines limits; asks group to make decision.
Manager permits subordinates to function within limits defined by superior.

the group could increase as structures like quality circles are put into place. (Figure 2.) This suggests that when organizations, and particularly school principals, provide structures which provide teachers the freedom and expectation to identify their wants and needs as well as to suggest ways to acquire them, the climate encourages participative decision making and changes.

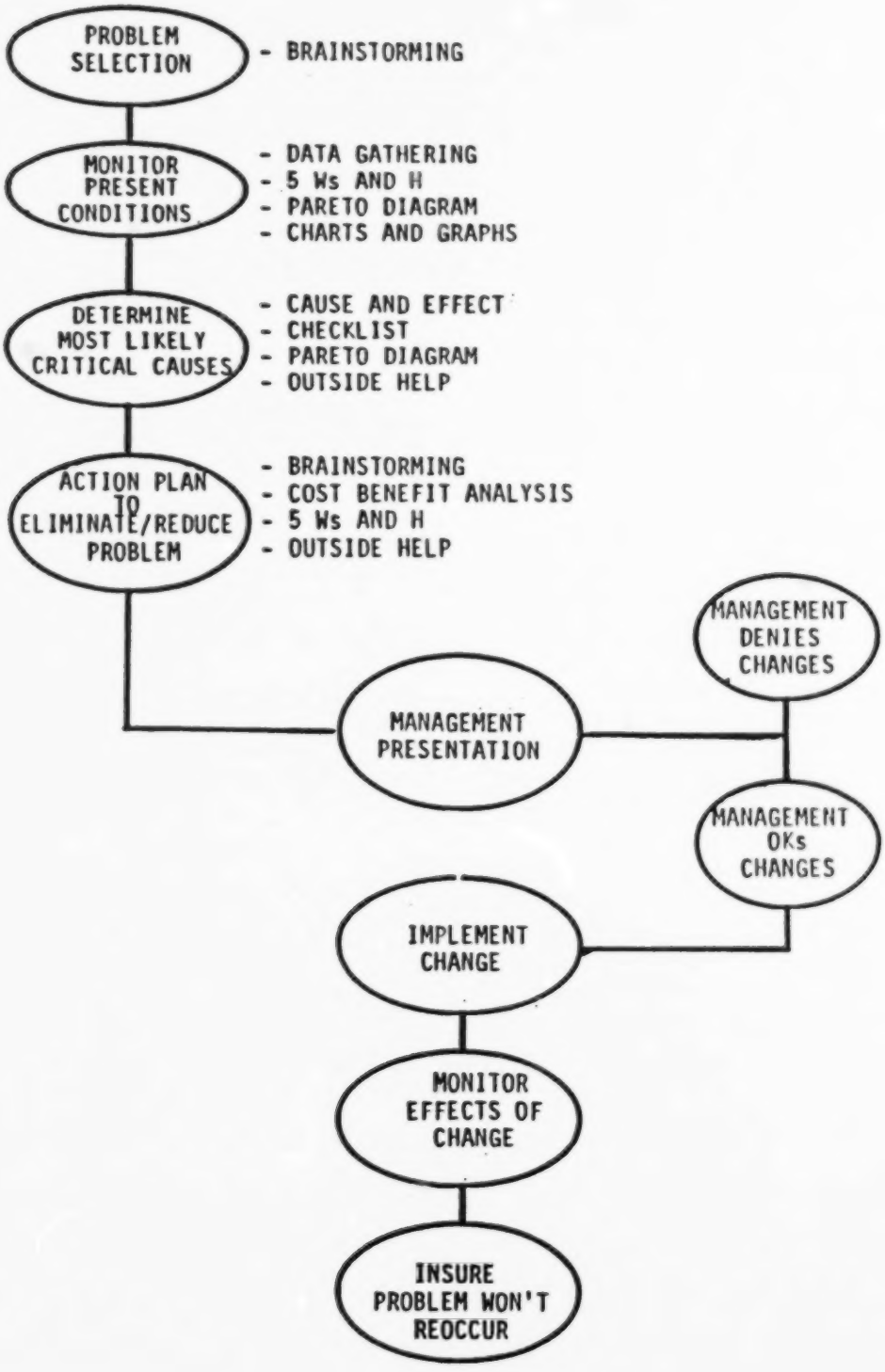
Program Description

Quality circles is both a philosophy and a structure for participative management. The process is designed to encourage employees doing similar work to meet regularly to learn and use basic problem solving and decision making techniques. The structure gives people freedom to meet one hour a week, on work time (or with compensatory time provided in their schedules) to identify and solve problems they think will improve their work and work life.

The quality circle process is directed toward change. It requires training in problem solving techniques, group dynamics, and specified procedures for holding effective meetings. The process, shown in Figure 3, "The Quality Circle Process," structures employees to determine their wants and needs, with an expectation that they also must 1) verify the needs by monitoring present conditions, 2) generate causes and problem solutions, and 3) select the most appropriate way to change the situation. When the solution is identified and substantiated through verification, it is presented to management who has the authority to approve or deny the proposed change. Management is interpreted as the principal or administrative team in schools.

In the Baltimore County Public Schools, the pilot program was established with goals of increased productivity and motivation of staff toward excellence in education. Board of Education members not only supported the endeavor, but took an active role in initiating the program. Top and mid-level management, teacher professional organizations, unions, and staff development consultants were appointed to a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is a part of the parallel structure created to initiated and support participative management. The Steering Committee developed a policy, selected a program coordinator, and initiated system-wide communication about the project.

Figure 3. THE QUALITY CIRCLE PROCESS



Briefings were held for principals and other office heads throughout the school system and many volunteered to begin pilot quality circles at both school-based and central office sites. Ten circles were established for school-based certified and classified personnel as well as central office employees after approval by the Steering Committee.

Following a three-year study and extensive evaluation process, the quality circles program was approved on July 2, 1987 by the Superintendent's Staff. Further, a charge was given to the Steering Committee to explore ways to institutionalize the concept. The decision to expand participative management structures was based, in part, on the results of the evaluation conducted by the Department of Research and Evaluation. It was found that 90 percent of those involved in quality circles, making decisions within the context of their work environment, feel that employees throughout the school system would benefit from participation (Participants' Evaluation of the Quality Circle Program, 1986).

Case studies of the work of two school-based circles demonstrate the effects of teachers working together to solve problems they perceive to be roadblocks to greater effectiveness.

Case Studies

Two case studies are presented to describe what actually happened in an elementary school and a middle school when teachers became involved in a participative management structure. It is important to remember that the problems identified and the actions taken may not necessarily represent the only possible or needed changes. They may not even be recommended courses of action. Very rarely does any educational situation as complex as those existing in schools today have just one "best way." The case studies are included to

illustrate the process of identifying the wants and needs for change as perceived by the teachers themselves, presenting the outcomes to the principals of each of the schools, and achieving approval for the change from the central office level.

The Scotts Branch Elementary Case

Scotts Branch Elementary School is in the northwest section of Baltimore County which is northwest of the city in an area with transient student population. Although the school of approximately 378 students is within the county jurisdiction, many students enter the school from the neighboring city school system.

There is a 74 percent minority enrollment with divergent racial groups representing Black, Asian, Hispanic and white communities. Test scores reflect achievement and ability levels which are above the county average. Mean Baltimore County test scores exceed those of the nation as a whole. The staff at Scotts Branch is made up of a majority of white teachers with 16 percent minority staff.

The socio-economic status of the large majority of the families would be considered middle to lower middle class. Generally, parents work outside of the home and it is difficult to contact them during school hours. A preschool program and other special programs are available for students in the school.

In early 1985, a quality circle was formed consisting of the principal as leader, a pupil personnel worker as facilitator, four teachers and a guidance counselor. Following the eight week training period, the principal turned over leadership to a teacher elected by the group. The principal then left the circle as a participating member, but attended meetings when requested by the circle. (The principal was transferred to another building in 1986 and the

assistant principal joined the circle while the new principal supported and encouraged the circle to continue.)

The circle has continued to meet throughout the nearly three years since its inception. The first project, though informal, was to identify a time for the circle to meet during the school day when teachers could attend without disadvantaging the learning process of students.

Following the organization and training, the members of the circle, called "IDEAS, LTD," brainstormed topics they perceived to be problems at the school. In addition, they surveyed the entire faculty using the Open-Ended Data Collection Form" shown in Figure 4. The results were presented in the graph, Figure 5, "Problems Identified at Scotts Branch." The frequency of selection of each problem is noted on the left vertical axis. Problems perceived by most teachers were "too much paperwork," "insufficient cooperation and communication," "lack of parent support and involvement," "poor building maintenance," and "difficulties with how children are placed."

Analysis of each of these concerns by the circle included consideration of factors which seemed more important to change. The circle decided to proceed with the project "Communications With Parents" with goals of investigating methods and times for improving communications with parents who work, have no telephones, or are otherwise difficult to contact and to initiate two way communications.

After gathering data and analyzing it, the circle decided the problem, as earlier defined, could not be solved without involvement from others outside the circle. Since problem identification in beginning circles needs to be focused on a well-defined, clear task over which the circle has some control, it was decided to defer the project of "Communications with Parents."

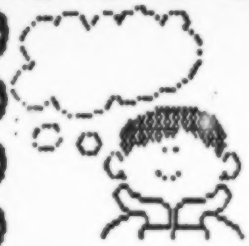


Figure 4. Open-ended Data Collection Form

SCOTTS BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

QUALITY CIRCLE "I.D.E.A.S. L.T.D."

Our quality circle is a problem solving group attempting to improve the quality of our school lives. Your feelings are important to us. Please help us to identify a school problem. Your responses to the following items would be helpful.

I. Your Ideal Professional Fantasy.

A. What qualities would be important in your ideal school?

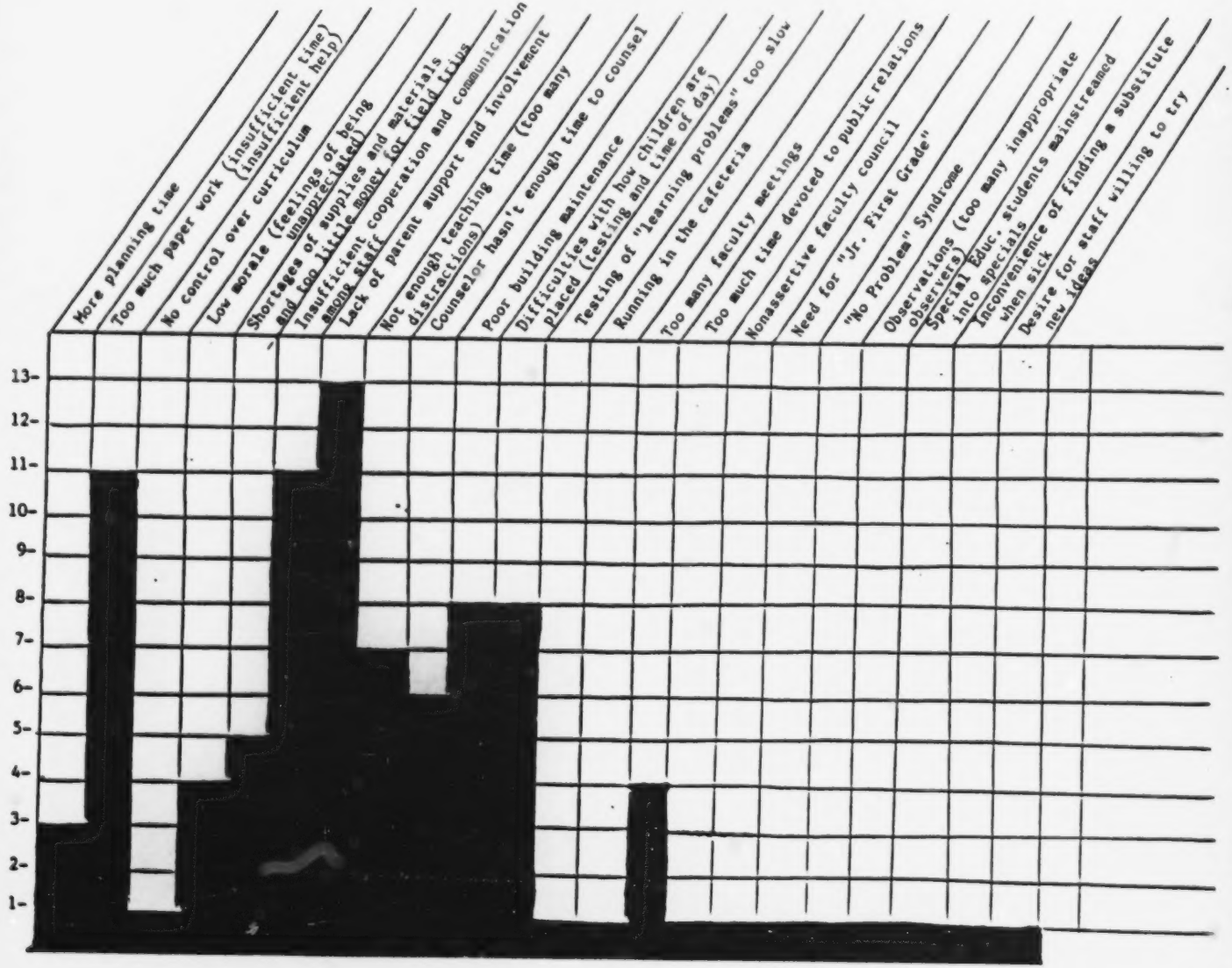
B. What are some methods you have observed in other schools that have been successful?

II. Pet Peeves and Other Irritations.

A. What shortcomings does our school have that prevents us from achieving the ideal?

B. Is there anything that drives you crazy?

Figure 5. Problems Identified at Scotts Branch


More planning time
Too much paper work (insufficient time) (insufficient help)
No control over curriculum
Low morale (feelings of being unappreciated)
Shortages of supplies and materials and too little money for field trips
Insufficient cooperation and communication among staff
Lack of parent support and involvement
Not enough teaching time (too many distractions)
Counselor hasn't enough time to counsel
Poor building maintenance
Difficulties with how children are placed (testing and time of day)
Testing of "learning problems" too slow
Running in the cafeteria
Too many faculty meetings
Too much time devoted to public relations
Nonassertive faculty council
Need for "Jr. First Grade"
"No Problem" Syndrome
Observations (too many inappropriate observers)
Special Educ. students mainstreamed into specials
Inconvenience of finding a substitute when sick
Desire for staff willing to try new ideas
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

The next project undertaken by the IDEAS, LTD. circle was "Placement Procedures for New Entrants." The circle had identified the problem, verified its authenticity for the faculty in the data collection and survey, then began to analyze it and generate solutions. The circle presented recommendations to the principal and assistant principal following careful study. These recommendations were considered by the administrative team and approved by the principal. A process for entering students was initiated to include guidelines for placing new students in classrooms only after an initial screening for reading and math levels. Figure 6 illustrates the process, "New Entrants Procedures for Placement."

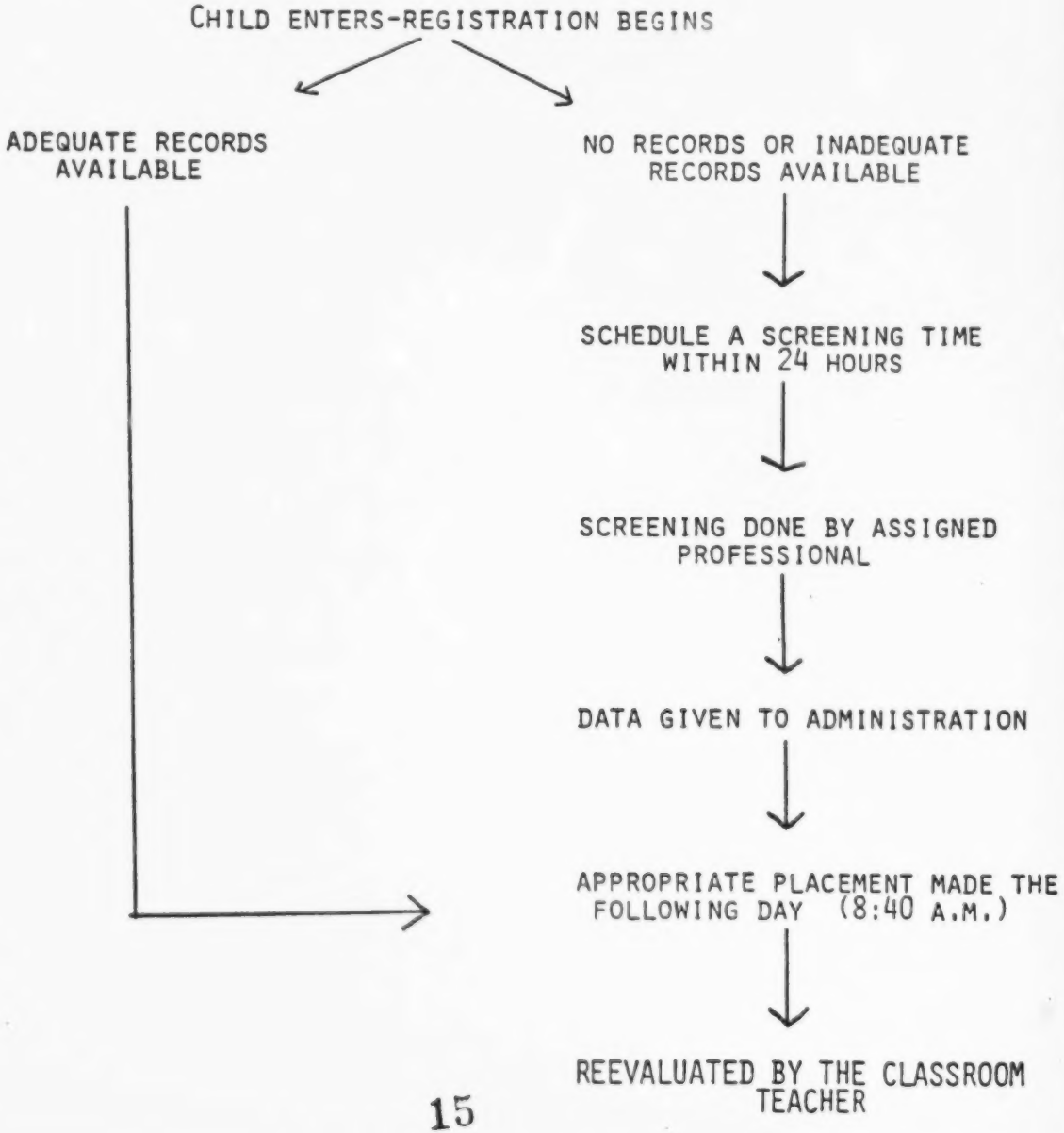
The circle conducted a follow-up study to obtain staff and student reactions to the new procedure. The results found new students were reported to be placed accurately and to be adjusting to the new setting quickly and more successfully.

Subsequently, the circle identified a problem that was closely related to the previous one. "Accurate Placement of Summer Entrants Prior to the First Day of School" was perceived to be another project worthy of circle study. This was due to the fact that over 100 new students (26 percent of the student body) enter the school during the summer. Of these, approximately 50 percent are reading more than one year below grade level.

The circle analyzed the procedures and staffing conditions during the summer. They made specific recommendations which were presented to the principal and assistant principal in a management presentation. Since the project and recommendations required action at the central office level, the Area Assistant Superintendent also was invited to the management presentation.

What were the outcomes? Approval for the reading specialist to work for a specific period during the summer to do the screening and testing of new

Figure 6. NEW ENTRANTS PROCEDURE FOR PLACEMENT


CHILD ENTERS-REGISTRATION BEGINS
ADEQUATE RECORDS AVAILABLE
NO RECORDS OR INADEQUATE RECORDS AVAILABLE
SCHEDULE A SCREENING TIME WITHIN 24 HOURS
SCREENING DONE BY ASSIGNED PROFESSIONAL
DATA GIVEN TO ADMINISTRATION
APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT MADE THE FOLLOWING DAY (8:40 A.M.)
REEVALUATED BY THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

entrants prior to school opening, and approval for an additional half-time staff position to help in the screening, testing and placement of students as well as with the ongoing program to support those reading more than a year below grade level.

The use of a participative management structure involving teachers in decision making, resulted in the problem solution described. In addition, other areas of concern were identified and were communicated with administrators. These were called "Short Term Goals" (Fig. 7) and were presented as areas for administrators to consider. Another exciting outcome of the use of the quality circle technique was reported. Several of the teachers in the circle reported using the problem solving techniques of brainstorming, cause-effect problem analysis, data collection and graphs with their students. Students were successful and motivated to continue the process in solving classroom problems. Students also have been participating in quality circles in other school systems in a more formal way (Buckley 1987).

In an interview with the principal of Scotts Branch Elementary School, other outcomes of the use of participative management structures were identified. A portion of that interview, reproduced here, points out the perceptions of the principal about the value of the increasing involvement of teachers in decision making:

Question: How long have you had quality circles in your school?

Principal: "About three years."

Question: Have you discovered any "stars" from the circles?

Principal: "People who really shine? I can't think of any who didn't. The teachers were all outstanding. They were there, on-time, and participating. They all stayed with the project.

"One who had not been verbal in front of the entire faculty seemed to develop leadership skills in the circle first. Then she did it in the faculty meetings."

Figure 7. Short Range Goals at Scotts Branch

SHORT RANGE GOALS

1. QUESTIONING TEACHER JUDGEMENT ON REPORT CARDS.

2. CANDY SALES FOR FUNDRAISERS DESPITE CONCERNS FOR NUTRITION.

3. USE OF GYM BY OTHER GROUPS IN THE MORNING.

4. CENTRAL LOCATION FOR READING MATERIALS.

5. NEED FOR A POSTED PULL OUT SCHEDULE.

6. TEACHER RELEASE TIME TO VISIT THEIR OWN CHILDREN DURING AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK.

7. NEED OF MORE STORAGE SPACE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION EQUIPMENT.

8. PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR K-2.

Question: What is the average size of your school circle?

Principal: "Six. Other resource people attend often, but six are regulars."

Question: What changes have come about as a result of quality circles in your school?

Principal: "In the school house it is unique because you don't have a real product. The change I saw was that teachers participating in the management role learned about the way things were already being done and most of the time found out they were being done in the most appropriate way. Then they shared that with the rest of the staff.

"They learned about how things were done, why they were done that way and they communicated that to the rest of the staff."

"It changed the whole morale of the school."

Question: It would seem that circles would analyze themselves out of existence, is that the case?

Principal: "Not in our experience. Once a problem is solved, the circle members see new ways to modify it. They were constantly seeking ways to upgrade the total educational program for the children."

Question: What effect, if any, do you see from involving teachers in participative decision making?

Principal: "The biggest effect I saw was that it tended to treat teachers as professionals. It's an issue we keep looking at. It challenges them professionally and recognizes their expertise. The teachers are using their expertise in a salient, professional way."

"That's what really helped the teachers."

The Old Court Middle School Case

A middle school of 735 students with nearly equal distribution of minority and white students in its population (49 percent minority). Of the 735 students, appropriately 150 qualify for the county gifted and talented program. The school is a center for gifted and talented students as well as for special education, intellectually limited classes.

The school theme, "Be the Best You Can Be," emphasizes high expectations for students and the standardized test scores reflect those expectations. The average achievement and ability test scores are both higher than the county average which exceeds national norms.

Old Court has served a stable white, Jewish community which gradually has experienced integration due to changed housing patterns. The school now serves a community of two major groups, Black and Jewish. The socio economic status of the community is predominantly middle class. However there are recent increases in the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunches. The 10 percent minority staff population at Old Court Middle is higher than the 8 percent county average. There are over double the number of Jewish teachers than there are Black.

The principal of Old Court Middle School volunteered to participate in the pilot quality circle project and participated in the leader-facilitator training for county personnel who would function in these new roles. Following training, the principal organized a quality circle during the spring of 1985. He remained the circle leader throughout the training period, then a teacher/leader was elected. The original leader and facilitator, an instructional assistant from the Division of Instruction, have continued to work with the circle during its two and one half years.

From the beginning, the administration worked diligently to schedule quality circle meeting times during the working day and, at the same time, maintain a learning program for students that is uninterrupted. At present, the circle meets after school hours with adjustments made to individual schedules so they are compensated for meeting times.

The first project identified by the circle was "Parent Involvement/Student Discipline." After further investigation, data collection and analysis, the project was deferred.

Another project, "Interim Report Forms" was initiated by the circle and verification was sought from the entire faculty. The data collection instrument is shown in Figure 8, "Survey Form on Interim Reports."

Based on the results of the survey form and the circle's priority on the problem, an interim report form was designed and a presentation was made to the Old Court administrative team and faculty. The principal accepted and supported the circle's effort and approved "one-time" use of the report form as a pilot project to continue the study. The report form was used in spring, 1986 and the results of both faculty and parent opinions to the new form were gathered, tabulated and reported to the faculty in June, 1986. The opinions from both groups were most positive indicating that the new form should be continued.

Based on the results of these surveys, the circle recommended that the interim report form be continued for one year. The principal took action to involve the Area Assistant Superintendent who approved and supported the project. At this point, barriers to the process emerged at the central office level. The system then appointed a countywide committee to study efforts to modify interim reports. After consideration by the committee, approval was granted to Old Court with funding available to support the use of the interim report for the recommended one year period. A member of the Old Court administrative team was named to the countywide study committee.

The outcomes for Old Court were: an increased understanding of the workings of a school system by teachers, a new interim report (See Figure 9.), time saved in preparing the interim reports, and more clear communications with parents regarding the progress of students.

Figure 8. Survey Form for Interim Reports

OLD COURT MIDDLE SCHOOL

December 9, 1985

The Quality Circle members are working on a possible problem concerning the interim reports. The circle is interested in the amount of time that you spent in the preparation of the interim reports. Consider the time spent from the beginning of the process to the receipt of the cover letter cut-ups that are returned to the teachers from the parents.

	Amount of Time	Comment
1. How long does it take to prepare one interim?		
2. Do you give every student an interim?	YES - NO	
If so, how long does it take to complete an interim for every student that you teach?		
3. Do you have time in the school day to prepare interims?		
4. How long do you spend collating interims for homeroom distribution?		
5. Homeroom teachers - Could you use someone to help you (a buddy) collate the interims?		
6. Other		

Thank you,
The Quality Circle

Figure 9. **OLD COURT MIDDLE SCHOOL**
INTERIM REPORT

Student Name _____ Homeroom_____

The teachers of Old Court Middle School want to keep parents informed about the progress of their children in school. Below is a record of your child's progress. If no remarks have been recorded for a particular subject you may assume that your child's progress in that subject is satisfactory or better. If you would like to have a conference with the teacher, contact the school.

PROGRESS KEY

1. Is achieving consistently at a high level
2. Is progressing satisfactorily
3. Has shown marked improvement
4. Is not progressing as well as expected
5. Is in danger of failing
6. Is failing

[S] Superior [ ] Satisfactory [N] Needs Improvement

		FIRST TERM										SECOND TERM									
SUBJECT	TEACHER	BEHAVIOR	CLASSWORK	HOMEWORK PREPARATION	TEST PERFORMANCE	REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED	WORK HABITS	INITIATIVE	PROMPTNESS TO CLASS	PROGRESS		BEHAVIOR	CLASSWORK	HOMEWORK PREPARATION	TEST PERFORMANCE	REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED	WORK HABITS	INITIATIVE	PROMPTNESS TO CLASS	PROGRESS	
ENGLISH																					
READING																					
SOCIAL STUDIES																					
MATHEMATICS																					
SCIENCE																					
FOREIGN LANGUAGE																					
PHYSICAL EDUCATION																					
MUSIC																					
ART																					
HOME ECONOMICS																					
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION																					

		THIRD TERM										FOURTH TERM									
SUBJECT	TEACHER	BEHAVIOR	CLASSWORK	HOMEWORK PREPARATION	TEST PERFORMANCE	REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED	WORK HABITS	INITIATIVE	PROMPTNESS TO CLASS	PROGRESS		BEHAVIOR	CLASSWORK	HOMEWORK PREPARATION	TEST PERFORMANCE	REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED	WORK HABITS	INITIATIVE	PROMPTNESS TO CLASS	PROGRESS	
ENGLISH																					
READING																					
SOCIAL STUDIES																					
MATHEMATICS																					
SCIENCE																					
FOREIGN LANGUAGE																					
PHYSICAL EDUCATION																					
MUSIC																					
ART																					
HOME ECONOMICS																					
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION																					

It is ESSENTIAL that we know that the student's parent or guardian has seen this report. Please sign and detach the slip below and have your child return it to the homeroom teacher within three school days.

OLD COURT MIDDLE SCHOOL INTERIM REPORT
PARENT RETURN SLIP

I have seen the interim report for _____ _____
(Student's Name) (Homeroom)

_____ _____
(Parent or Guardian Signature) (Date)

Other outcomes were identified in an interview with the Old Court principal. Selected portions of that interview are included:

Question: How long have you had quality circles in your school?

Principal: "We are into our third year of circle operation."

Question: Have you discovered any "stars" from the circles?

Principal: "I wouldn't say I've identified stars I didn't know about, but I have identified a staff member who has had an interest in management decisions for a long time. It has given her a useful function to channel her efforts into a constructive manner."

"The quality circle techniques provide guidelines and structures for problem solving to someone who has the potential for being a negative influence."

Question: What is the average size of your school circle?

Principal: "Six."

Question: What changes have come about as a result of quality circles in your school?

Principal: "It's hard to identify specific changes other than the interim report. However, other kinds of changes have been observed."

"It gave us the energy to do a project like that. With an outside facilitator coming in to the school, we could stay focused on solving problems beyond those things we need to do as a normal part of our daily work."

"The training of the quality circle forced us into an objectivity in data gathering and problem solving which we didn't have before."

"Another thing it has done is introduce techniques that we now use throughout the building regularly when we meet. These techniques are understood by the whole staff when they're used. Brainstorming is an example. Now we usually always begin to brainstorm solutions in our meetings when we have problems to solve."

Question: Are there any other changes that have come about as a result of quality circles in your school?

Principal: "Every teacher who has ever participated in the quality circle has always expressed interest in continuing.

Only those who have been transferred out of the school are no longer with the group."

"I think the circle has had a positive effect on morale. Not just on those who have been involved, but also its had spillover effect on others."

"It also functions as a support group to those in the circle. Characteristically, those who participate seem to feel almost a therapeutic release when they share their concerns and work on something that seems formidable. At times you hear them make remarks at the end of the circle meeting that they feel better."

"The meetings seem to be energy producing, almost like exercise."

Question: What effect, if any, do you see from involving teachers in participative decision making?

Principal: "The quality circle approach is one that seems to help teachers deal with their perceived powerlessness."

"Also, the circle has been helpful to me in that just the introduction of people I trust coming into the building from the outside helps me to cathart. It's a side benefit I hadn't thought of."

"It is more helpful than a supervisor who comes in and out because they're in an evaluative role. The facilitators of quality circles have insights into the school and, therefore, it makes them a valuable resource."

The case studies illustrate the effects of installing one type of participative management structure within a school. The outcomes described above seem to have implications for the use of such structures to initiate change.

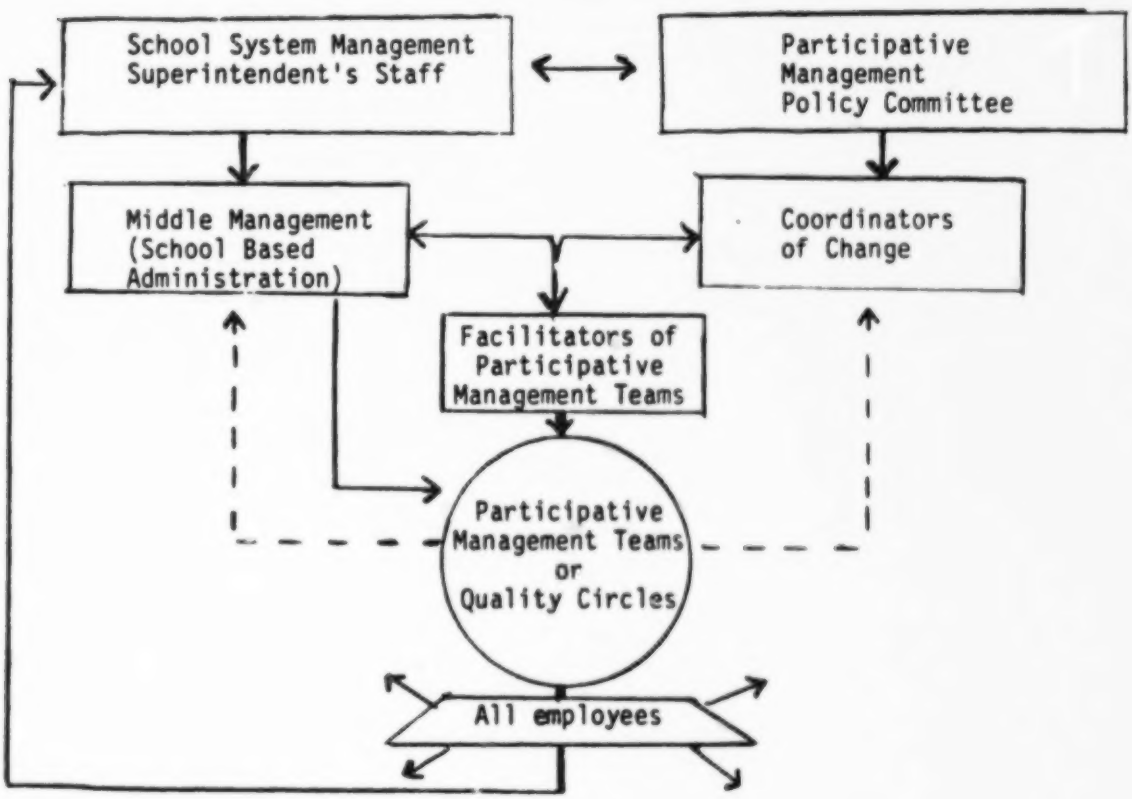
Summary and Conclusions

Implementing participative management structures, like quality circles, needs to begin with a supportive philosophy toward employee involvement held by the top level management as well as a parallel structure for initiating the program. Because the decisions and recommendations of individual school groups

may impact the procedural operations of the system, it is important to have a support system identified as the parallel structure recognized by the middle and top level managers. This structure functions to support the change and to reduce barriers to the change process.

The participative management structure illustrated below describes the parallel structure with the traditional organizational structure. This structure could be used in both the entire school system and individual school settings. It is shown in Figure 10 "Participative Management Structure." Eventually, when the concept is institutionalized, such a parallel structure may no longer be necessary.

Figure 10: Participative Management Structure



This parallel structure consists of a steering committee or policy committee which is made up of both Superintendent's staff, middle management level, building administrators, and trained facilitators of participative management teams. It is this committee which establishes policy, guides the program, and supports the change process. Reporting to the steering committee are coordinators and facilitators of the participative management teams.

The structure shown in Figure 10 illustrates the parallel structures of the organization and the support group. The members of the policy committee, however, also are the same personnel responsible for the organization's functioning and success. Both viewpoints are integrated through the existence of the participative management teams with facilitators trained in quality circle techniques. When the effects and outcomes of the team work are realized by all employees, the process impacts on other participative management structures such as task forces, committees, and employee suggestion programs. Currently, one Associate Superintendent has initiated a circle of middle level managers.

In summary, implementation of participative management structures uses employee involvement to process information as the needs of schools change. These structures support teachers' involvement in decision making and have outcomes which benefit not only those teachers involved and the students they serve, but also other staff are reported to be more receptive and responsive to changing needs.

It has been the purpose of this paper to describe structures useful for initiating participative management in schools so that teachers can identify and solve many of their own problems. Further it has been intended to show the effects of such employee involvement. Increased staffing, improved

communications with parents, and teacher time saved have been demonstrated results of the process. Further, those who have been involved in identifying and solving their own problems report changes in increased cooperation and teamwork when compared to total worksite employees (Participants' Evaluation of the Quality Circle Program, 1986). Dramatic positive shifts occurred in the perceptions of cooperation between employees and supervisors and in participatory decision making. The use of these participative management structures were judged to have effected improvements in working conditions by three out of four participants in continuing quality circles (Participants' Evaluation of the Quality Circle Program, 1986). Principals interviewed also noted increased motivation and professionalism among staff.

Generalizations and Recommendations

These conclusions suggest that a generalization can be made regarding teachers who are involved in the identification and acquisition of wants and needs through participative decision making. That is, when teachers identify and solve their own problems, they are likely to feel energized, empowered, and effective in bringing about change toward school improvement.

It is recommended that implementation of structures for participative decision making be initiated at the top levels of the school system. It is possible to initiate such structures within individual schools. However, problems and projects identified in individual schools often reflect similar concerns within the system as a whole. Therefore, the implementation of such participative management structures may impact the central decision making body and conversely, central decisions may constrain implementation of

solutions suggested through the participative management teams. For those reasons, a parallel structure is needed initially.

It is incumbent upon those who consider the initiation of such structures to reflect on some of the following questions:

1. Is the organization ready for such group-centered leadership?
2. What would be the purpose or goals of initiating such structures?
3. What kinds of support would be available for a participative management parallel structure?
4. Is there a commitment to creating a people-building climate?
5. Does job security become an issue if the team develops certain labor saving or other change processes?
6. What reward system is available or could be available?
7. What implementation issues would be barriers to overcome (time, scheduling, support,...)?

While it is recommended that these questions be considered before implementation of a participative management endeavor, one may ask, "What are the other choices to encourage change from within school systems? What else is there to suggest in a complex environment with no "one best way?"

Why not take definite steps toward participative decision making as a structural part of the school? Such structures appear to be a next step . . . rather than eliminating the structure of educational administration altogether.

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